CITY OF WELLS.

URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY.

MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 1900.

Area of District 720 Acres.

Estimated Population 4,900.

To the Urban Sanitary Authority of the City of Wells.

18TH JANUARY, 1901.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report for the last year of the Nineteenth Century.

Geology.

The Geology of the district shews that the lower parts are made up of Gravel and Red Marl, but that Lias and Limestone are chiefly met with at higher points.

Occupation.

The occupation of the inhabitants, Trading and Agricultural, there are also Engineering Works, a Dairy Factory, and a Factory where Brushes and Chairs are manufactured.

Water Supply.

In my previous Annual Report I drew attention to the great inconvenience the Inhabitants were subjected to in having their supply of drinking water cut off so continuously, and for so long a period during the night, and urged on the Council the desirability of inducing the Water Company to provide an adequate and constant supply which they could so readily have done by simply constructing a Storage Reservoir, capacious enough to hold the immense quantity which is allowed to run to waste through the overflow during several months of each year, and which, if conserved, would, I feel sure, prove sufficient to compensate for the decreased flow which follows a spell of dry weather.

During the past year there has been no change for the better, the water having been cut off continuously at night for months up to the end of November. The day pressure has also been reduced considerably during the whole summer to such an extent in fact as to necessitate the Company's Manager having to journey up to the sluice in New Street each time a service was held at the Cathedral, in order that he may turn on sufficient water to allow of the organ being played therein.

Failing to induce the Water Company to improve their service the Town Council resolved to apply for an Act of Parliament, giving them powers to purchase the Company so as to be able to build a Storage Reservoir of capacity sufficient to maintain constant service, and meet all necessary requirements. Having called in an Engineer, and received a report favourable to the scheme, and approximately estimated the cost, a Ratepayers' meeting carried a resolution in its favour. A Poll of the Owners and Ratepayers also resulted in a very large majority voting in favour of an application for Parliamentary powers being proceeded with; there is therefore a probability of the supply being rendered adequate.

The Water Company have also applied for an Act to enable them to raise funds for the purpose of increasing their supply, but the suggested mode of procedure, as shown on the plan, appears to me totally inadequate to overcome the difficulty. Instead of utilising the ample supply they have at their disposal,

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and allow to run to waste, they purpose erecting three small tanks, and collecting water from three springs, which are comparatively insignificant as regards their yield, and are said to be nearly always dry in summer. It is to be hoped such a scheme will be *strenuously* opposed in the interest of consumers, and will not receive official sanction.

Drainage, &c. The Sewers are freely ventilated by shafts, and automatic flushing tanks are used; all public ejects are periodically flushed and disinfectants used. Considerable attention has been paid by the Sanitary Inspector to the Closet accommodation and mode of flushing, and in numerous cases improvements have been effected.

Scavenging. House refuse, ashes, road scrapings, sweepings, &c., are removed each morning in covered carts, by the Council's servants, to the Sewage Farm.

Sewage Disposal. The Septic Tanks are being erected under the direction of Messrs. Cameron, Commin & Martin, of Exeter, and considerable progress has been made with the work; the excavations are completed, many of the walls built, and the concrete floors about to be commenced. One of the storm filters has been finished, and the other is in an advanced stage.

Disinfection. The Sanitary Inspector pays great attention to the disinfection of rooms in which there have been cases of infectious disease, he also keeps a stock of reliable disinfectants, and supplies them in necessary cases, every precaution being taken to prevent accident through carelessness in their use.

An efficient Steam Disinfector has been erected on the Hospital premises by Messrs. Thresh, and was used for the first time last week for the Disinfection of Bedding, Clothing, &c.

Isolation Hospital. The enlargement of the Isolation Hospital has been carried out, and the wards are now fit for the reception of patients, no reasonable expense has been spared by the Council, and the place is now a credit to the City.

Inspection. I have inspected the district at various times and found the Bakeries, Slaughter Houses, and Milk Shops clean and well looked after. The floors of several Slaughter Houses have been relaid, and in one case permission to sell milk has been withdrawn on account of unsanitary surroundings.

Dwellings of the Poorer Classes. Cottage property has steadily improved. The tenements I alluded to in my last report have been put into good condition, and, acting on my advice, the Council have taken the necessary steps to have others dealt with and owners charged.

Bye Laws. Bye-laws are in force as enumerated in Report for 1898.

Common Lodging Houses. The Common Lodging Houses are well ordered, clean, and are altogether good specimens of their class.

Notification of Disease. Notification has been in force since 1890, and Measles is included in notifiable diseases.

Zymotics. Eleven cases of Diphtheria, three of Erysipelas, five of Scarlatina, and three of Enteric Fever have been notified during the year, but in no case were unsanitary conditions found to exist. Measles have been Epidemic during the latter part of the year, eighty-two cases having been notified by the Medical Attendants or persons in charge. No death has occurred from zymotic disease.

Deaths from other causes. Four persons have died from Phthisis, and twelve from other diseases of the Respiratory Organs. Cancer caused the death of seven old persons. Four inquests have been held during the year.

Birth Rate. The birth of one hundred and four children, 47 males and 57 females, were registered, the birth average being 21.63 per 1000 population.

Death Rate. The total deaths at all ages are returned as 78, equal to a death rate of 15.91 per 1000 population, but as no less than eighteen deaths of non-residents have to be deducted the total is reduced to 60, which gives a death rate for the City of 12.24, which is the lowest recorded.

I find the death rate ten years since (1890) was no less than 21.57, or after deducting the deaths of non-residents 18.34.

Infantile Mortality. Fifteen infants died during the year (several of whom only lived a few days or hours), the infantile death rate being 144 per 1000 births registered.

Zymotic Death Rate. The Zymotic Rate is nil.

Appended to this Report are the new Statistical Tables issued by the Local Government Board in place of those formerly in use, as well as the Inspector of Nuisances' record of the various duties performed by him during the year.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,
Yours faithfully,

R. PURNELL,
Medical Officer of Health.

INSPECTOR OF NUISANCES'

Summary of Work for Year ending December 31st, 1900.

Premises visited on complaint or information	371
Letters and written notices served...	45
Notices served *re* Infectious Diseases	106
Notices given by the Council served	6
Weekly visits to Slaughter Houses	624
Visits of Inspection to Bakehouses	48
Quarterly notices served *re* Cleansing of Slaughter Houses ...	48
Flushing apparatus added to Closet Accommodation	12
New Water Supply from Company's Mains	7
Nuisances removed—	
Accumulation of Ashes, Manure, &c.	25
Choked or defective Closets cleaned and put in order ..	16
Choked or defective Drains opened and properly cleansed ...	21
Overcrowding dealt with	4
Pigs kept contrary to Bye-law	3
Defective Shooting to Eaves	2
Bad Smells, Smoke Nuisances, &c.	11

I regularly visit all the Dairies, Milk Shops, and Public Stable Yards in the City.

In all cases of Infectious Disease notified I visit and serve formal notice of instruction and where necessary supply disinfectants and personally attend to the disinfecting and cleansing of infected places.

I have during this year prepared a book containing a statement shewing every house in the City, the names of the present Owners and Occupiers, the number of rooms, the water supply, the closet accommodation, the drainage, and other details. This book is deposited at the Town Clerk's Office for general reference when required.

WM. H. JENKINS,
Inspector of Nuisances.

January 14th, 1901.